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### ENHANCING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE THROUGH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES

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**Abstract.** Emotional Intelligence (EI) is recognized as a significant factor in enhancing employee effectiveness and organizational competitiveness. While previous studies have extensively examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance, the mediating role of professional competencies has received limited attention. The present study aims to investigate the influence of emotional intelligence on employee performance and to examine whether professional competences mediate this relationship. A systematic literature review was conducted to evaluate the existing literature on the interconnections among emotional intelligence, professional competences, and employee performance, and to identify current research trends and knowledge gaps. The selected studies were analyzed using thematic synthesis to discern patterns, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings. The review indicates that emotional intelligence consistently fosters the development of interpersonal communication, leadership, and problem-solving skills, all of which are associated with high employee performance. However, few studies have explicitly addressed professional competencies as a mediating construct between emotional intelligence and employee performance. The findings highlight the necessity for future empirical studies to validate this relationship and offer practical implications for organizations aiming to enhance workforce effectiveness through competency development.

**Keywords:** emotional intelligence, professional competence, employee performance.

### EMOTSIONAL INTELLEKTNING XODIMLAR FAOLIYATI SAMARADORLIGIGA TA'SIRI: KASBIY KOMPETENSIYALARNING MEDIATORLIK ROLI

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**Annotatsiya.** Emotsional intellekt xodimlar faoliyati samaradorligini va tashkilotning raqobatbardoshligini oshirishda muhim omil sifatida e'tirof etiladi. Avvalgi tadqiqotlarda emotsional intellekt va xodimlar faoliyati samaradorligi o'rtasidagi o'zaro bog'liqlik keng o'rganilgan bo'lsa-da, kasbiy kompetensiyalarning ushbu bog'liqlikdagi mediatorlik roli yetarlicha tadqiq etilmagan. Mazkur tadqiqotning maqsadi emotsional intellektning xodimlar faoliyati samaradorligiga ta'sirini o'rganish, shuningdek, kasbiy kompetensiyalarning ushbu bog'liqlikda mediator sifatida namoyon bo'lish-bo'lmasligini

aniqlashdan iborat. Tadqiqot doirasida emotsional intellekt, kasbiy kompetensiyalar va xodimlar mehnat faoliyati samaradorligi o'rtasidagi o'zaro bog'liqliklarni o'rgangan mavjud ilmiy tadqiqotlarni tahlil qilish, shuningdek, ushbu yo'nalishdagi zamonaviy tadqiqot tendensiyalari va ilmiy bo'shliqlarni aniqlash maqsadida tizimli adabiyotlar sharhi o'tkazildi. Tanlab olingan tadqiqotlar mavjud qonuniyatlar, nazariy yondashuvlar va empirik natijalarni aniqlash uchun tematik tahlil usuli yordamida tahlil qilindi. Adabiyotlar sharhi natijalari emotsional intellekt xodimlarning shaxslararo muloqot, yetakchilik va muammolarni hal qilish ko'nikmalarini izchil rivojlantirishga xizmat qilishini, mazkur ko'nikmalar esa xodimlar faoliyatining yuqori samaradorligi bilan bog'liqligini ko'rsatdi. Shu bilan birga, emotsional intellekt va xodimlar mehnat faoliyati samaradorligi o'rtasidagi bog'liqlikda kasbiy kompetensiyalarni bevosita mediatorlik qiluvchi konstrukt sifatida ko'rib chiqqan tadqiqotlar soni juda kam. Olingan natijalar mazkur bog'liqlikni tasdiqlash uchun kelgusida empirik tadqiqotlar o'tkazish zarurligini ko'rsatadi hamda kasbiy kompetensiyalarni rivojlantirish orqali xodimlar faoliyati samaradorligini oshirishga intilayotgan tashkilotlar uchun amaliy tavsiyalarni ilgari suradi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** emotsional intellekt, kasbiy kompetensiyalar, xodimlar faoliyati samaradorligi.

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## **ВЛИЯНИЕ ЭМОЦИОНАЛЬНОГО ИНТЕЛЛЕКТА НА РЕЗУЛЬТАТИВНОСТЬ СОТРУДНИКОВ: МЕДИАТИВНАЯ РОЛЬ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНЫХ КОМПЕТЕНЦИЙ**

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**Аннотация.** Эмоциональный интеллект является значимым фактором повышения результативности сотрудников и конкурентоспособности организации. Несмотря на то, что в предыдущих исследованиях широко изучалась взаимосвязь между эмоциональным интеллектом и результативностью сотрудников, медирующая роль профессиональных компетенций получила ограниченное внимание. Цель настоящего исследования заключается в изучении влияния эмоционального интеллекта на результативность сотрудников, а также в определении того, выступают ли профессиональные компетенции в качестве медиатора этой взаимосвязи. Был проведен систематический обзор литературы с целью анализа существующих исследований, посвященных взаимосвязям между эмоциональным интеллектом, профессиональными компетенциями и результативностью труда сотрудников, а также для выявления текущих исследовательских тенденций и пробелов. Отобранные исследования были проанализированы используя тематический анализ для выявления закономерностей, теоретических подходов и эмпирических результатов. Результаты обзора показывают, что эмоциональный интеллект последовательно способствует развитию навыков межличностного общения, лидерских и проблемно-ориентированных навыков, которые связаны с высокой эффективностью сотрудников. Вместе с тем лишь немногие исследования непосредственно рассматривают профессиональные компетенции в качестве медиаторного конструкта между эмоциональным интеллектом и результативностью труда сотрудников. Полученные результаты подчеркивают необходимость проведения будущих эмпирических исследований для подтверждения данной взаимосвязи и предлагают практические рекомендации для организаций, стремящихся повысить результативность персонала посредством развития профессиональных компетенций.

**Ключевые слова:** эмоциональный интеллект, профессиональная компетентность, результативность труда сотрудников

## **Introduction**

In the current dynamic business environment, organizations must enhance employee performance while adapting to rapidly changing market conditions, including digital transformation and globalization. Achieving sustainable organizational success requires not only technical knowledge and professional expertise, but also effective communication and management of workplace relationships. Consequently, emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as a critical construct in organizational behavior and human resource management, attracting considerable attention from both researchers and practitioners.

The concept of emotional intelligence was first introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990) as the ability to perceive, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions effectively [1]. Later, Goleman (1995) expanded this concept by emphasizing its importance for leadership effectiveness, workplace relationships, and organizational success [2]. Since then, emotional intelligence has been recognized as a critical factor influencing employees' attitudes, behaviors, and overall job performance across different organizational contexts.

Recent empirical studies demonstrate that emotional intelligence contributes to positive organizational outcomes. Mysirlaki and Paraskeva (2020) found that emotionally intelligent leaders enhance virtual team effectiveness through transformational leadership, underscoring the significance of emotional competencies in digital work environments [3]. Similarly, Supramaniam and Singaravello (2021) reported that emotional intelligence positively affects organizational performance in the public sector by increasing employees' effectiveness and improving organizational functioning [4]. Additionally, Sembering et al. (2020) demonstrated that emotional intelligence enhances employee performance both directly and indirectly through increased job satisfaction and a positive organizational climate [5]. Collectively, these studies indicate that emotional intelligence is a valuable organizational resource that can improve both individual and organizational performance.

Although research on emotional intelligence has increased, the literature remains fragmented regarding the mechanism by which emotional intelligence influences employee performance. Most prior studies have primarily focused on direct relationships or explored mediating variables such as transformational leadership, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior. In contrast, professional competencies have received comparatively less attention, and the literature on employee performance has not been systematically synthesized.

The objective of this article is to systematically review the existing literature on emotional intelligence, professional competencies, and employee performance. This review aims to synthesize current empirical evidence, identify major research trends, and assess whether professional competencies serve as a potential mechanism linking emotional intelligence with employee performance.

## **Methods**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a systematic literature review (SLR). A systematic literature review examined and synthesized existing evidence on the relationship among emotional intelligence, professional competencies, and employee performance. The systematic approach enabled structural analysis of prior research, identification of consistent and contradictory findings, and evaluation of the extent to which professional competencies explain the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance. The review process comprised four stages: identifying relevant literature, screening retrieved publications, assessing eligibility, and thematically synthesizing the selected studies.

### **Search Strategy**

A structured literature search was performed utilizing major academic databases and scholarly search platforms. The review targeted studies investigating emotional intelligence in relation to professional competencies, employee competencies, job performance, and related organizational outcomes.

The search strategy combined the following keywords and phrases: *“emotional intelligence”*, *“professional competencies”*, *“professional competence”*, *“employee performance”*, *“job performance”*, and *“organizational performance”*. Boolean operators **AND** or **OR** were used to generate combinations such as *“emotional intelligence AND employee performance”*, *“emotional intelligence AND professional competences”*, and *“professional competences AND employee performance”*.

The review focused on contemporary research and included earlier studies that provided theoretical or empirical evidence on the relationship between emotional intelligence, workplace competencies, and performance. This approach allowed the review to incorporate both foundational evidence and recent developments in the field.

### **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Studies were included in the review if they met following criteria: (1) publication as academic research articles; (2) emotional intelligence served as a central variable or theoretical construct; (3) examination of professional competencies, employee or job performance, or closely related workplace outcomes; and (4) research conducted within, or demonstrating clear relevance to, an organizational or professional context.

Studies were excluded if they focused solely on clinical, educational, or other non-workplace outcomes without a direct connection to professional behavior or performance. Publications that referenced emotional intelligence only indirectly, lacked sufficient methodological detail, or did not contribute to understanding the relationships examined in this review were also excluded.

### **Data Synthesis**

Given the variations in research context, sample characteristics, measurement instruments, and analytical approaches among the selected studies, a statistical meta-analysis was deemed inappropriate. Consequently, thematic analysis analysis was employed to synthesize the findings.

The evidence was organized around three principal themes: (1) emotional intelligence and professional competencies; (2) emotional intelligence and employee performance; and (3) the potential mediating role of professional competencies in the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance. Findings from individual studies were compared to identify recurring patterns, convergent evidence, and contradictory results.

### **Results**

#### **Characteristics of the Reviewed Studies**

The systematic review revealed considerable diversity in the organizational contexts, methodological approaches, and outcome variables among the selected studies. The research spanned various professional settings, including public administration, healthcare, law enforcement, virtual teams, manufacturing and service organizations. Most studies employed quantitative research designs to examine emotional intelligence in relation to employee and organizational performance. Several studies also explored indirect relationships involving organizational commitment, job satisfaction, leadership, workplace climate, and professional competencies.

Despite differences in sample and organizational settings, emotional intelligence is predominantly conceptualized as an employee's capacity to recognize, understand, regulate, and effectively use emotions to interact in workplace interactions. Employee performance is typically assessed using measures such as individual job performance, team effectiveness, or broader organizational performance indicators. Professional competencies appeared less frequently as an explicit construct; however, several studies examined related capabilities, including communication, teamwork, conflict management, decision-making, adaptability, leadership, and problem-solving.

Overall, three main themes emerged from the synthesis: (1) contribution of emotional intelligence to professional competencies and workplace capabilities; (2) the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance; and (3) the role of an intermediate mechanism, particularly professional competencies, in translating emotional intelligence into improved performance.

### **Emotional Intelligence and Professional Competencies**

The first theme identified in the reviewed literature is the role of emotional intelligence in developing and applying competencies to professional practice. The studies consistently demonstrate that emotional intelligence is linked to capabilities such as communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, leadership, decision-making, adaptability, and relationship management.

Jordan and Troth (2024) provided early evidence that emotional abilities are particularly important in team-based problem solving [6]. While emotional intelligence did not influence individual performance on primarily cognitive tasks, employees with stronger emotional abilities resolved conflicts more effectively and achieved superior group performance.

Recent organizational research demonstrates similar patterns. Investigations into leadership, knowledge sharing, workplace relationships, and decision-making suggest that emotional intelligence enhances employees' ability to interact effectively with others and respond appropriately to complex workplace situations (3, 7, 8). Rather than serving solely as an individual psychological trait, EI appears to facilitate a broader set of behavioral and interpersonal competencies essential for successful professional performance.

Recent empirical evidence directly supports the relationship between emotional intelligence and professional competence. Mehralian et al. (2025) found that emotional intelligence exerts a significant positive effect on clinical competence among employees in healthcare settings [9]. These findings indicate that individuals who are adept at understanding and regulating emotions are also better able to apply professional knowledge and skills effectively in demanding workplace situations. Although clinical competence is a profession-specific form of competency, this evidence establishes an empirical basis for considering professional competencies more broadly as an outcome of emotional intelligence.

### **Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance**

The second and most consistently represented theme addresses the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance. In various organizational contexts, most reviewed studies report positive associations between EI and individual, team, or organizational performance. Emotional intelligence appears to enhance performance by enabling employees to regulate emotional responses, build productive interpersonal relationships, manage workplace pressures, and collaborate effectively [3, 10].

Nevertheless, findings on the relationship between emotional intelligence and performance have been inconsistent. Several studies have identified a significant direct relationship between emotional intelligence and performance. However, other research suggests that this effect is more apparent when intermediate organizational or individual mechanisms are considered. For example, Edward and Purba (2020) reported both a positive

direct effect of emotional intelligence on employee performance and an indirect effect through organizational commitment [11]. In contrast, Febrina et al. (2021) found no significant direct effect of emotional intelligence on employee performance [12]. Nonetheless, emotional intelligence contributed to performance when organizational commitment was introduced as an intervening variable [12].

### **Professional Competencies as a Mediating Mechanism**

The third theme represents the most significant finding of the review. The literature indicates that emotional intelligence frequently influences performance via intermediate mechanisms rather than exclusively through a direct pathway. Previous studies have identified organizational commitment, transformational leadership, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behavior, and additional workplace factors as mechanisms by which emotional intelligence leads to improved outcomes [3, 10, 11, 12].

Within this broader context, professional competencies represent a potentially important but relatively underexplored mechanism. Mehralian et al. (2025) found the most direct evidence demonstrating that professional competence increases with emotional intelligence, positively influences job performance, and significantly mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and performance [10]. These results support the proposition that emotional intelligence enhances performance partly in part by strengthening employees' capacity to apply professional knowledge and skills effectively.

Nevertheless, the available evidence remains limited. Most reviewed studies have examined emotional intelligence and professional capabilities independently or have focused on alternative mediating variables. Additionally, direct evidence regarding competency mediation is confined to profession-specific contexts. Therefore, while the existing literature supports the plausibility of an emotional intelligence-to-professional competencies-to-employee performance pathway, it does not yet provide sufficient evidence to establish this as a general mechanism across organizational settings.

Collectively, the findings demonstrate that emotional intelligence is positively associated with employee performance in organizational contexts; however, its effects are not entirely direct or consistent. The analysis indicates that emotional intelligence may operate as an underlying capability that strengthens professionally relevant competencies, which in turn contribute to enhanced performance. This relationship supports further empirical investigation of professional competencies as a mediating variable between emotional intelligence and employee performance.

### **Discussion**

The results of this systematic review indicate that emotional intelligence is generally associated with improved employee and organizational performance; however, this relationship is not always direct. Several studies report a positive direct effect of emotional intelligence on performance, while others propose that its impact is mediated by factors such as organizational

commitment, leadership, job satisfaction, and workplace behavior [5, 10, 11, 12]. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence should be regarded not as an isolated predictor of performance but as an underlying capability whose effectiveness depends on its translation into professionally relevant behaviors and skills.

The results indicate that professional competencies may link emotional intelligence with employee performance. Emotional intelligence facilitates communication, teamwork, conflict resolution, adaptability, decision-making, and relationship management, which are essential components of effective professional functioning [3, 6, 7, 8]. Mehralian et al. (2025) further corroborate this interpretation, finding that clinical competence significantly mediated the relationship between emotional intelligence and job performance [9]. Although their findings are limited to a specific professional context, they offer empirical support for the broader conceptual pathway from emotional intelligence through professional competencies to employee performance.

These findings indicate that organizations should incorporate emotional intelligence development into comprehensive employee competency-development programs. Training in emotional regulation, empathy, communication, and interpersonal effectiveness may enhance employees' capacity to apply professional competencies and improve overall performance. However, the reviewed studies vary substantially in sample characteristics, organizational contexts, and how emotional intelligence and performance are measured. Moreover, few studies have directly examined the relationship between professional competencies and performance. Therefore, future research should empirically test the proposed mediating relationship across different industries and organizational contexts before it can be regarded as a generally established mechanism.

### **Conclusion**

This systematic literature review demonstrates that emotional intelligence plays an important role in enhancing employee performance, although its effects often occur through intermediate mechanisms rather than solely through direct relationships. The synthesis of existing studies suggests that professional competencies may serve as one such mechanism, as emotional intelligence fosters communication, teamwork, adaptability, decision-making, and other capabilities essential for effective professional performance. While emerging empirical evidence supports the mediating role of professional competencies, research investigating this relationship across diverse organizational contexts remains limited. Consequently, future studies should empirically examine the proposed relationship among emotional intelligence, professional competencies, and employee performance across various industries and occupational settings. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of integrating emotional intelligence development with

professional competency development within organizational human resource management practices.

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